

SENATE BILL 2718

By Kyle

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to minority teachers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-706, is amended by deleting the section and substituting:

(a)

(1) The Tennessee student assistance corporation (TSAC) shall administer a minority teaching fellows program for talented Tennesseans who aspire to be teachers.

(2) Participation in the minority teaching fellows program is limited to:

(A) College juniors, seniors, and post-baccalaureate candidates admitted to educator preparation programs in this state who pledge to teach in the public schools of this state for up to four (4) years; and

(B) Students who received the minority teaching fellows program award prior to July 1, 2021, and who continue to maintain all eligibility requirements.

(3) Recipients must maintain continuous enrollment in a degree program leading to licensure as a teacher in a higher education institution within this state with an educator preparation program approved by the state board of education.

(4) Each fellowship award is in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) and is renewable up to three (3) times, contingent upon satisfactory academic progress.



(5)

(A) Recipients who become public school teachers in this state shall receive forgiveness of the fellowship balance based on one (1) year's teaching service for each year the fellowship was awarded.

(B) TSAC shall forgive the loan if, within seven (7) years after graduation, the recipient teaches for three (3) consecutive years, unless the recipient takes an approved leave of absence, at a public school in an LEA that, at the time the recipient accepts employment with the LEA, is determined to be a school system that is marginal or in need of improvement as determined by the commissioner of education according to the school district accountability framework adopted by the state board of education. TSAC shall also forgive the loan because of the death or permanent disability of the recipient.

(b)

(1) TSAC, in conjunction with the state board of education and the Tennessee higher education commission, shall promulgate rules for the selection of minority Tennessee citizens and for the management of the program.

(2) All scholarship loans must be evidenced by notes made payable to TSAC, which must bear interest at the rate of nine percent (9%) per year beginning September 1 after completion of the program, or immediately after termination of the scholarship loan, whichever is earlier. The scholarship loan may be terminated by the recipient withdrawing from school or by the recipient not meeting the standards set by TSAC.



(c) The Tennessee higher education commission shall notify fellowship award recipients of teaching opportunities and programs that offer assistance for minority teachers.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.